REMARKS:

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 1-18 were rejected. Claims 1 and 3-18 have been amended for clarification and claim 2 has been cancelled without prejudice. New claim 19 has been added. Thus, claims 1 and 3-19 are pending and under consideration. No new matter has been added. The rejections are traversed below.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §102(e):

Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,867,572('572), and claims 1, 2, 7, 8 and 14-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,023,681('681).

'572 discusses providing a call queuing system of a telecommunications service according to which information is provided tailored to each customer's position in the queue.

'681 discusses predicting wait times for customers by classifying each customer according to one or more attributes of the customers and generating a probability distribution of service time based on the attributes.

The present invention is directed to a service providing system and method that enables users to estimate a wait time by displaying an access number indicative of each request from a client and a submitted access number indicative of a completion of a service provided.

The Examiner compares the '572 queuing system for indicating information of a customer's call queue with the present invention. In '572, when a call is incoming to input ports, a system processor determines whether pointers indicating the head of the queue and end of queue respectively in a queue table of the data storage system are equal (see, column 3, lines 44-56 of '572). If so, the system determines that the queue for handing the calls is currently empty, and if not, the system determines that one or more calls is awaiting handling (see, column 3, lines 54-56 and column 4, lines 29-33 of '572). Then, using addresses in a table specified by the end of a queue pointer, the system stores the location of the caller at one of the locations in terms of the input port on which the call has arrived (see, column 4, lines 34-40 of '572) and provides a voice announcement related to the caller's position in the queue to the corresponding caller (see, column 5, lines 59-63 of '572).

Independent claim 18 as amended recites, a service provision system where the first server, "immediately connects said client with said third server when said third server becomes accessible and connects said client to said second server when said third server does not

become available" and the second server displays "information of a number of accesses directly or indirectly indicating a number of uncompleted requests according to said access number and said submitted number" that are respectively "incremented responsive to each request to said third server and responsive to each completion of providing a service from the said third server". This enables the present invention to notify a user of the user's wait state to access a server, thereby eliminating the need for the user to repeatedly make a request to access the server. The '572 system does not teach or suggest, "comparing the access number and the submitted access number" to determine whether the server accessible, where the access number is "incremented responsive to each request to said third server" and the submitted access number is "incremented responsive to each completion of providing a service from the said third server", as recited in amended independent claim 18.

In '681, when all agents are serving customers, the system provides new customers with an estimate of the wait time that the customer will endure (see, column 3, lines 8-14 of '681). The system examines attributes of each customer-in-service and generates probability distribution functions for the remaining service-time of each customer based on the attributes found (see, column 3, lines 18-24 and FIG. 2 of '681). Similar to the customers-in-service, the system also examines attributes of the customers-in-queue (see, column 3, lines 25-27 and FIG. 2 of '681). The customer attributes are used to generate a service-time for each queuing customer indicating a probability that the customer's service will be less than or equal to any specified time, and the system estimates a probability distribution function of the waiting time before beginning service based upon an estimated number of departures (see, column 3, lines 27-33 of '681). This means that the '681 system is directed to estimating a wait time for a customer using attributes thereof to predict whether the customer's service will be less than or equal to any specified time by incorporating an estimated number of departures.

Independent claims 1 and 15 as amended recite, determining or judging "whether said server becomes accessible by comparing an access number and a submitted access number when said client sends an access request to said server, said access number being incremented responsive to each request to said server and said submitted access number being incremented responsive to each completion of providing a service from the said server". The '681 system does not teach or suggest, "comparing an access number and a submitted access number when said client sends an access request to said server", where the access number is "incremented responsive to each request to said server" and the submitted access number is "incremented responsive to each completion of providing a service from the said server" for

determining accessibility of the server.

It is submitted that the independent claims 1, 15 and 18 are patentable over the cited references.

For at least the above-mentioned reasons, claims depending from independent claims 1, 15 and 18 are patentably distinguishable over the cited references. The dependent claims are also independently patentable. For example, as recited in claim 7, "said information of the number of accesses displayed on said client includes information that shows a sequential order of when said server becomes accessible" (claim 7), where the information of the number of accesses indicates "a number of uncompleted requests according to said access number and said submitted number" (claim 1). The '681 system does not teach or suggest, the information of the number of accesses indicating "a number of uncompleted requests according to said access number and said submitted number" displayed on said client includes "information that shows a sequential order of when said server becomes accessible", as recited in claim 7.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully traversed.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a):

Claims 3-6, 9-13 and 17 as being unpatentable over various combinations of the following: U.S. Patent No. 5,006,983 ('983), U.S. Patent No. 5,867,572 ('572), U.S. Patent No. 6,243,706 ('706), U.S. Patent No. 4,788,715 ('715), U.S. Patent No. 6,006,269 ('269), and U.S. Patent No. 6,470,323 ('323).

The arguments presented above in relation to independent claims 1 and 15 are incorporated herein to address the rejections of dependent claims 3-6, 9-13 and 17.

The Examiner acknowledges that '683 does not teach displaying information that shows when a server becomes accessible and a voice message that indicates when the sever becomes accessible, thus relies on '983 and '572 as respectively teaching the same.

In '983, communication devices are assigned to different individuals and the individuals are notified when a service resource is or will become available to serve a next individual (see, column 1, lines 40-51 and column 4, lines 50-64 of '983). Thus, the combination of '681 and '983 does not teach or suggest, displaying information of a number of accesses via said client indicating a number of uncompleted requests according to an access number and a submitted access number (claim 1), where "when said server is accessible, information that shows said server is accessible is displayed on said client before access to said server" (claim 3) and "a

message indicating that said server is accessible is uttered by voice from said client before access to said server (claim 4).

The Examiner also acknowledges that '683 does not teach use of an e-mail to a pre-registered mail address to show when a server becomes accessible and displaying information at varied times in accordance with the number of accesses, thus relies on '706 and '715 as respectively teaching the same. However, '706 is limited to indicating whether a new version of work or a component thereof exists via an e-mail when a user attempts to access an element (see, column 7, lines 48-51 of '706), and '715 is directed to administering a queue of incoming calls through pointers so that when a service position becomes available because a server has completed processing a call, the customer at the first position in the queue is connected to the server and the pointers associated with queued customers are updated (see, column 3, lines 10-17). Thus, the combination of '706 and '715 does not teach or disclose, comparing "an access number... and a submitted access number" (claim 1) to judge accessibility of a server, where "an e-mail that indicates [when] said server is accessible is sent to a pre-registered mail address of said user" (claim 5) and where the information is updated at a fixed time interval " varied according to said information of the number of accesses" (claim 6).

Moreover, dependent claims 9-13 and 17 are patentable over various combinations of '681, '269, '323, '572 and '706. Specifically, the combination of the references does not teach or suggest, "comparing an access number and a submitted number" to determine or judge whether a server is accessible including "allowing access of said client to said server upon the password input, regardless of said determination whether said server becomes accessible" (claim 9) and "said client judges whether said server becomes accessible when said client is connected with said server" (claim 17).

Claims 10-13 recite that, "a number of sellable goods in stock is further displayed at the time of displaying said information of the number of accesses on said client" (claim 10) and when the number of sellable goods in stock becomes zero, "information that shows the commodity sales of goods is finished is displayed on said client" (claim 11), "a message that indicates said commodity sales of goods is finished is uttered by voice from said client (claim 12), and "an E-mail that indicates said commodity sales of goods is finished is sent to a pre-registered mail address of said user" (claim 13),

It is respectfully submitted that claims 3-6, 9-13 and 17 are patentably distinguishable over the cited references.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully traversed.

NEW CLAIM:

New claim 19 is added to highlight a service providing method of the present invention, including "comparing an access number incremented responsive to each request to the server and a submitted access number incremented responsive to each completion of a service provided from the said server to determine whether the server is accessible" and "suspending the request from the client upon determining that the server is inaccessible and displaying a number of accesses including uncompleted requests on the client". Further, the method includes "connecting the client with the server when the server becomes accessible", where "the number accesses including the uncompleted requests is determined according to the access number and the submitted access number".

Thus, it is submitted that new claim 19 is patentably distinguishable over the cited references.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

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